

monstrances, been unable to moderate the prince, and turn him away from his tyrannic enterprises and designs, so that there remains no other expedient than this for conserving and defending their ancient liberties, their wives, children, and posterity, for whom, according to the law of nature, they are obliged to risk their lives and goods. That men have been driven to act on this expedient against a tyrannic prince is sufficiently evident from many examples in history. Such is the case of these provinces, which from time immemorial have possessed the right to be governed in accordance with their privileges and ancient customs. This obedience has, moreover, always been conditional, and these conditions are expressed in contracts and sworn agreements. If the prince has violated these contracts, he has justly forfeited the sovereignty."

That Philip of Spain has violated the compact on which his authority rests, is amply evident from the indictment which follows. It is a bald narrative of the crimes and sufferings of the last twenty years, which are left to speak for themselves. For these crimes and sufferings Philip is responsible, and is therefore justly declared deposed from his sovereignty, and all officials of State and the whole people are loosed from their allegiance accordingly. Said officials shall henceforth recognise no authority but that of the United Provinces and of the prince to whom they have proffered the sovereignty on certain conditions (viz., Alengon-Anjou), except in Holland and Zealand, which, by a special arrangement, had conferred their sovereignty on the Prince of Orange.

The Act of Abjuration is interesting as an attempt to apply political theory to practice. The doctrines enunciated in its wordy preamble are not new. The conception of the contract, of the law of nature, of the right of resistance and deposition, of the sovereignty by divine ordinance, might have been taken from the mediaeval writers. Or (and this seems to me very probable) they might have been borrowed directly from the "*Vindiciae contra Tyrannos*," published two years before, viz., in 1579. Its reputed author, Hubert Languet, had been the collaborateur of William himself in the composition of his "*Justification*" against the sentence of outlawry fulminated by Alva in 1568, and had been his associate in negotiations almost up to his death in October 1581. Now